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Suitland, MD 20758

July 13, 2000

John H. Thompson
Associate Director for Decennial Census
Bureau of the Census, Building 2, Room 3586
Suitland and Silver Hill Roads
Suitland, MD 20233

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am writing on behalf of the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) in response to the "Request for Comments on the Proposed Rule" published in the Federal Register on June 20, 2000 by the Secretary of Commerce regarding the procedure for release of the corrected data file for the 2000 Census. The proposed rule delegates the authority to make the decision on the release of the corrected data to the Director of the Census Bureau after receiving a report from a team of Bureau statistical experts.

The Washington Statistical Society represents statisticians from both the public and private sectors. It is the consensus of the WSS Board that this proposed rule deserves our support. It has long been known that the unadjusted Census counts disproportionately under-represent certain subgroups of the U.S. population. Statistical methods to correct the count represent a scientific approach to the problem. The proposed rule would place the problem and its solution in the hands of trained professionals, experts in methods to address such under-representation. It allows science to determine the best available methodology.

The Director of the Census Bureau has set forth in his Statement of the Feasibility of Using Statistical Methods to improve the Accuracy of Census 2000 (which accompanied this "Request for Comments on the Proposed Rule") the critical factors to be considered by the Census Bureau in determining whether the corrected data most accurately reflects the U.S. population. If the statistical experts at the Bureau are satisfied that the criteria are met, then the decision to issue the corrected data can be made as a matter of course. The WSS supports the Secretary of Commerce in his proposal and urge final adoption of the rule.

Sincerely,

Mary Batchner
President, 2000